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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2474

Aug. 31, 1990

WHEAT PRODUCTS SCORE IN JAPAN -- Are the Japanese giving up rice crackers for Western-style angel food cake? Not entirely, but Japan's restrictive rice policy is indirectly resulting in larger imports of U.S. wheat-based products, including mixed dough, pasta, biscuits, crackers, cakes & pastries, wheat gluten & flour preparations. "High rice support prices have resulted in drastic over production of rice, which the government has attempted to control by encouraging production of other crops, including wheat," says **James V. Parker**, U.S. minister-counselor for ag affairs in Tokyo. Contact: **Lynn K. Goldsbrough** (202) 382-9442.

DOG SNIFFS OUT SCREWORMS -- Caz, an 80-pound brown and white German wired-haired retriever can sniff out quarter-inch-long screwworm larvae. **John B. Welch**, Caz's USDA trainer, thinks dogs trained like Caz could help inspectors at quarantine stations keep screwworms from reinvading Mexico & the U.S. "I don't know of any other dog trained to do this job," says Welch. Screwworms ravage livestock in every Central American country by breeding inside their open wounds. Screwworms can also infect dogs, cats & humans. Contact: **John B. Welch** in San Jose, Costa Rica, at 00-11-506-299-851.

WILT-RESISTANT NORWAY MAPLE -- Two USDA scientists are working to develop Norway maples that will not succumb to the sometimes deadly *Verticillium* wilt. Norway maples are graceful, compact trees that thrive in urban areas. They are one of the five most popular street & shade trees in the U.S. "Right now, when a tree has the disease," says **Alden M. Townsend**, a plant geneticist at USDA's National Arboretum, "all you can do is prune out infected parts, water and fertilize the tree and hope for the best." Contact: **Alden M. Townsend** (202) 475-4824.

WHO OWNS RAILCARS? The U.S. grain industry depends extensively on covered hopper cars to transport grain, yet the seven largest firms own very few railcars, USDA found. "Although these firms accounted for more than 75 percent of all U.S. grain shipped by rail in 1986, they owned less than 2 percent of the nation's covered hopper car fleet in January 1990," says **Martin F. Fitzpatrick, Jr.**, administrator of USDA's Office of Transportation. Source: **Covered Hopper Car Ownership**. For a copy, call (202) 653-6296. Contact: **Larry Mark** (202) 447-3977.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW for USDA's 67th annual Outlook Conference -- Nov. 27 - 29 at USDA in Washington, DC. "New domestic policies for farming and dramatic changes abroad raise a number of questions about the climate for agriculture in the year ahead," says Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Economics **Bruce L. Gardner**. This year's conference will begin at 8:30 a.m., Tuesday Nov. 27, with topical sessions. Secretary of Agriculture **Clayton Yeutter** will present the keynote. Contact: **Raymond L. Bridge** (202) 447-5447.

WOODEN BRIDGES FOR THE FUTURE -- USDA & four major wood products trade associations are sponsoring a national awards competition for modern timber bridges to replace obsolete, deficient, or worn out bridges. And, the competition may result in many highway bridges of the future being made from wood. There are about 240,000 highway bridges in the U.S. that are obsolete or functionally deficient. Many span 50 feet or less, making them ideal for rehabilitation or replacement using modern wood products. **Contact: Richard Lindeborg (202) 447-5576.**

FOOD PRICES UP -- Last year food prices increased 5.8 percent -- the largest jump since 1981. Why? The 1988 drought, weather-related disturbances, a growing demand for poultry in fast food firms & inflation in the general economy. Food prices in grocery stores increased 6.5 percent, while restaurant & fast food items increased 4.6 percent. Did you know consumers paid almost 29 percent more for potatoes in 1989 and 11 percent more for processed veggies? **Contact: Ralph Parlett (202) 786-1870.**

RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCILS -- Secretary of Agriculture **Clayton Yeutter** says Rural Development Councils will be formed in all 50 states to develop strategies for cooperative actions by federal agencies to promote rural economic development. "Ultimately, I expect these councils to result in the creation of comprehensive approaches to rural development within each state and territory," Yeutter says. The project will be launched this summer in Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas & Washington. **Contact: Kelly Shipp (202) 447-4623.**



RADIO-TV CHIEF Vic Powell recently showed USDA's Radio & TV facilities to ten Polish & ten American exchange students who were touring USDA headquarters. The students were completing a six-week program in which they studied agricultural trade, practical farm management & lived on farms in each other's country. (USDA Photo by Ed Poe.)

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

- AGRICULTURE USA #1734** -- On this edition of **Agriculture USA**, **Maria Bynum** talks with **Kentucky Wildlife Specialist Tom Barnes** about how to get rid of nuisance animals like the mole, the woodchuck & the chipmunk. (Weekly 13-1/2 minute documentary.)
- CONSUMER TIME #1216** -- Eating more fruit; sports drinks vs. water; football field turf; tips for the home landscape; lawn wrecking moles. (Weekly consumer features 2-1/2 to 3 minutes long.)
- AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1723** -- **USDA News Highlights**; wheat reserves; 1990 soybean loans; a sense of the census; China's 1990 grain crop. (Weekly news features.)
- NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1335** -- Biological fungicides; "environmentally-friendly" insecticides; futuristic insect control; brucellosis vaccine; mystery blight. (Weekly research feature stories.)
- UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Tues., Sept. 11, crop/weather update; Wed., Sept. 12, U.S. crop production, USSR grain outlook, world ag supply/demand; Thurs., Sept. 13, world ag/grain production, world oilseed situation, world cotton, fruit/tree nut outlook; Fri., Sept. 14, sugar outlook, milk production.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE
(Week of Aug. 29)

- FEATURES** -- **Pat O'Leary** reports on edible food coatings; **Will Pemble** reports on bar codes for bees; **Joe Courson** reports on athletic myths; & **Lisa Telder** reports on cancer & fat research & reducing fat in the diet.
- ACTUALITIES** -- **Norton Strommen**, USDA chief meteorologist, on weather developments & crop development; **USDA Economist Kathy Green** on vegetable prices; **USDA Economist Larry Van Meir** on feed outlook; **Lonnie King**, USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service, on restrictions to prevent *Salmonella* infections.
- UPCOMING FEATURES** -- **Lynn Wyvill** reports on gas & oil production on the national forests & **Chris Larson** reports on the cleanup & prevention of animal waste from waterways around farms.

Available on Satellite **Westar IV**, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Transponder 12D (Channel 23)
SATURDAY10:30 - 11:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 10D (Channel 19)
MONDAY8:30 - 9:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 12D (Channel 23)

OFFMIKE

ATTENDANCE...at the Indiana State Fair and county fairs was the largest in years, says **Dave Koffee** (WIBC, Indianapolis), reflecting producer optimism. Hoosiers have established a restoration fund to modernize buildings at the state fairground. Most of the structures are in need of utilities and major repair.

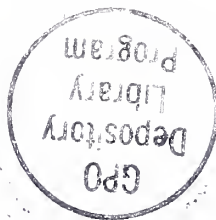
HOT TEMPERATURES...are welcome in the area served by **Mike LePorte** (KMA, Shenandoah, Iowa). Producers hope the late summer heat will hasten soybean development because beans are susceptible to an early frost. Ground moisture conditions are ahead of last year; a full year's amount has fallen in eight months.

GEORGIA PEANUT...producers may lose half their crop in some counties, says **Ken Tanner** (WRAL-TV/Tobacco Radio Net, Raleigh, N.C.) due to extreme dryness. North Carolina peanuts about average; Virginia better than average. Soybeans Ok so far, but moisture is needed. Hurricane season could help, but risky.

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Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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100 MPH WINDS...damaged farm buildings in Wisconsin and dropped two inches of rain on an already soggy region, says **Pam Jahnke-Welch** (WMEQ, Menomonie). Corn is showing nitrogen deficiency, is too late for harvest maturity & will be mostly used as silage. Pam says cows are learning the back stroke to get to the barn.

CONGRATULATIONS...to **Mike Thomas** (University of Missouri, Columbia). His Extension Video News won a national award from the Agricultural Communicators in Education for an item on turkey production.

ABC-TV NEWS...has requested a copy of USDA's five-part series, "The California Drought: Unsettling The West," produced by our **Pat O'Leary**, for background on a program about U.S. water shortages.

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Chief, Radio & TV Division